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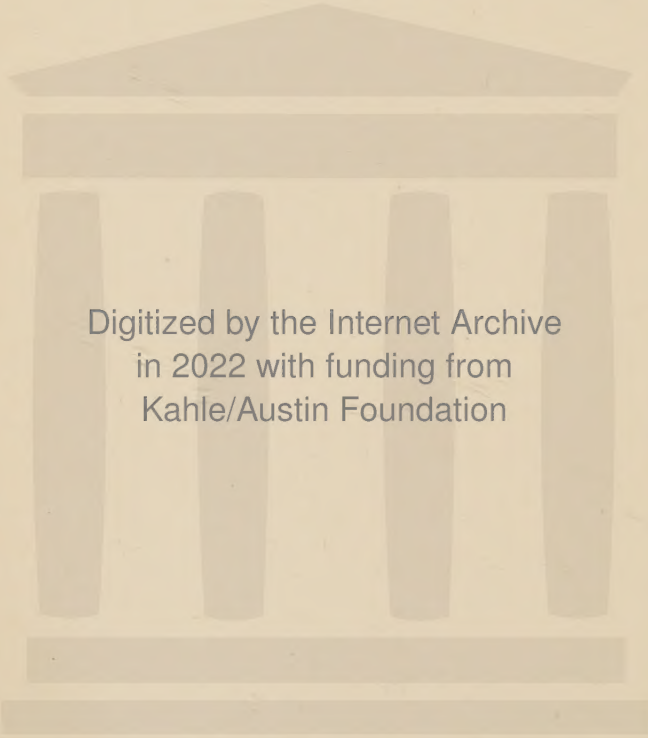
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## STRAY THOUGHTS



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# STRAY THOUGHTS

BENJAMIN H. ROBERTS

&

DELL MAE ROBERTS



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## DEDICATION

To that power that leads to greater attainment,—be it God or nature, faith or reason, knowledge or inspiration, mental or spiritual, material or visionary, real or imaginary. As it measures man's conception of destiny, it is personal, and none but he can question; as it measures his actions in contact, it is of common interest.

To that power first manifest by individual incompleteness, and first expressed in appeals of posterity; which finds its continuation first in the home, expands itself on the open highways under the tolerant graces of liberty, and asserts its power in any way necessary to guard either; reaches its highest appeal in love; commands to duty and justice; reveals its beauty in all accomplishments, its greatness in tolerance, and its universal presence in sympathy; rewards with enlightenment, assurance, and promise; leads to an uncertain destiny or an unlimited continuation. A power that is not yet clearly defined, nor can be until man has neared the pinnacle of his attainment which, let us hope, is unbounded.

To all Gods,—whether they be Idols, Myths, Delusions, Visions, or Realities,—that lead to a greater Tomorrow, seek the simple truth, endeavor for construction, protect liberty, and serve posterity.



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## STRAY THOUGHTS





## REVERIE

### *Prelude*

Who would dream by a pleasant stream  
Or full moon over head.  
Paint the moon by which I dream  
Not up; or gone to bed,  
Or crescent rim behind a cloud  
Concealed, almost, from sight,  
Or revealed through wooded shroud  
Against a sodden night.

Let not vision be clear conceived  
Or objects outlined clear.  
Deny the things I have believed,  
Vision is drawing near.  
Dark paint the sky with angry storm,  
Outline a rugged cliff  
To show uncertain in its form  
By moonbeams through a rift.

Let all my longings be denied,  
An outcast I would stand,  
And find that storm personified  
The things that build a man.  
Envelop me in cringing doubt,  
Deny the hope of aid.  
By unknown things we ferret out  
Progress and men are made.

Let me stroll by pleasant streams  
And walk the moon lit nite,  
But place the substance of my dreams  
Beyond a doubtful fight.  
That I have fear I will admit,  
To deny would be shame.  
To fear and conquer keeps man fit  
To proudly bear his name.

Who dares not breast against his chance  
On fields where dangers tread,  
Nor seeks to conquer and advance,  
May say he knows no dread.  
He stays beneath protecting wings  
And prattles on with toys,  
Too weak to seek the newer things  
Or share the greater joys.

In a park where the timber abruptly halted  
And sunlight played on a velvet surface of grasses  
Flecked with wild flowers and extended,  
Like the door yard of the fairies,  
To the rugged edge of a precipice,  
An artist, shielded from the sun by a Piñon,  
Watched over the valley as he painted a picture.

I looked on as the valley was lifted  
And transformed on the canvas,  
Became almost a miniature portrait  
Of an elusive something

That seemed to hover,  
Like a protecting spirit,  
Over the quiet valley.

Sometimes it seemed hidden in flashes of color  
From the gardenlike Ranchos  
Or in patches of whiteness,  
Where adobe walls in irregular formation  
Gleamed like crystal cities  
In stories of another day,  
Or more distant,  
Concealed itself among the Pueblos  
That stood like enchanted palaces,  
Somber and brown,  
In a shadowed niche of the canyon  
And housed the traditions of centuries  
Of a peaceful people  
Who have withstood the ravage of time  
In a faith that mocked at conquest  
But strong in the continuation of kind.

I left him with his dream and his fancies  
To walk through an aisle of the forest  
That led to a cliff rock  
Which arose perpendicular  
Above the uneven incline of the mountain.

As I neared the massive obstruction,  
What had appeared a smooth surface  
Proved a much-weathered precipice

Creased with seams,  
And rent from top to abutment  
By crevices that zig-zagged, in patch work,  
Without design or order.  
A strong hold of the elements of earth  
Crumbling before the bombardment of storm.

Shrubs, mosses and wild flowers  
Clung to the cliff rock.  
Near the top was a gnarled cedar  
Striving for substance  
And proclaiming life's enchantment  
More by its mantle of mistletoe  
Than from the green of its own foliage.  
Nature, tolerant of destruction,  
Gives beauty, through life, to decay.

On a log near the cliff I rested,  
Afraid to approach lest it tumble;  
Still, I reasoned,  
It has stood thus for ages.  
But to belie my assurance  
A field of barren boulders  
Were strewn in rugged disorder.  
Once they were the cliff rock.

I slept, and, as I dreamed,  
An old man with kindly features  
Came upon the summit,  
Placed his scythe in a piñon

And proceeded to find a harmony  
That would fit both sound and color.

He played a weird contrast of sounds,  
Then proceeded to mix moisture  
With sunlight on a heap of débris,  
Continually sounding the violin  
As delicate shades were fashioned  
And sprinkled over the mountain.

Near him, a dwarf of impish maneuvers  
Dallied with a bubble  
As he loosened the boulders  
With the toe of his slipper  
And tumbled them over the precipice,  
Then stood obediently humble  
As the aged one reproved him—  
To begin again his impish maneuvers,  
As the old man turned to his colors  
Or winked in a humorous fashion  
Down to where I was watching  
And seemed to impart the message:  
No use to inform the young rascal  
That his maneuvers are helping!

A stir of wind,  
A dreadful rumble,  
A flash of fire  
And as I awoke  
The storm was there.

In an instant it blotted the day  
With darkness  
As dense as night without a sky,  
And trembling  
In fear of destruction,  
Worse than just to die,  
I groped for shelter  
From its rage.  
Let him who thinks he has no fear  
Defy a mountain storm!

Pebbles in the icy gale  
Cut like darts from a savage army.  
As over the rocks I crept  
Pierced and torn and bleeding,  
Racked with wounds  
That did not pain,  
But eased like balm,  
A deeper dread  
That tore my soul asunder.  
I reached the cliff  
And crouching there  
Caressed my wounds as treasures.  
A swollen bruise,  
A stinging gash  
Or streaming blood  
In the lightning flash  
Bore witness of my being.



With bleeding hands  
I felt my way  
In search of ledge  
Or cave to shelter me  
Cringe, timid one,  
An idol may verify your day;  
But sounder substance  
Is found within your soul  
If you cast the stone away!

Abrupt it left me.  
And I, an outcast,  
Found nothing for support.  
Alone I searched for substance;  
I begged for reasons why.  
No sense of being  
Harkened back to me,  
No sense of sight or sound,  
No sense of odor or sense of self  
Would prove my feet upon the ground,  
Until death,  
A phantom of the storm,  
Swallowed up the sense of real  
And touched my tongue with drops of dew,  
Wafted fragrance from broken bough,  
And dying blossoms' sweet perfume,  
Touched the chill in icy wind  
Pointed to a distant glow,  
Whispered, "Peace to you,

Wretched one, die.  
Peace, wretch, die."

Standing up I faced the gale.  
The sting within its breath  
Could give but assurance;—  
Or death,  
And better die to-day  
Than hide a life away  
In fear.

Submerge your soul in depths of peace,  
Balm the touch of time,  
Rest your vision in tinted light,  
Harmonize the sound,  
Cool your tongue with nectar drops,  
Incense the air  
With sacrifice of tender life,  
Live by grace  
And die a wretched thing;  
But mix with mine  
The stinging touch,  
The morbid vision and harsh sound,  
The rancid taste,  
The odor of decay,  
Bring care and pain,  
They lend a fighting hand,  
They prove my aim,  
They let me live;—  
A power.

And die;—

A man.

Storm, I grapple in your wrath,  
To pull your sting  
Or yield in death.  
Resolved I started out to conquer fear.

A flash from the elements  
Rent the blackness of the storm  
And seemed to cleave the cliff above,  
Lit up a cavern in its walls.

A grotto yawned  
And in its depths  
Revealed a hope  
Beyond the dragon fear,  
That blocks each path  
To swallow up the wreck of "I,"  
To scorch my soul  
With flames its nostrils do exhale  
Or yield before the force of will  
To let me pass, a victor over fear,  
And light a path beyond its rage.

Within, the roar of storm subdued,  
And warmed by trusts  
In which I dared believe  
(The cavern that I sheltered in  
Sheltered only me)  
I peered around  
And through the night

A light peered back at me.  
Nor yet a light  
But a yellow glow  
That touched no object in the night  
Or reached the outer edge of darkness,  
But before the substance of its rays  
Outlined a form bent low  
Of one who wrote  
As absorbed in interest  
As was his light in darkness;  
As if a celestial light  
Haloed the handicraft of a sculptor  
Who had chiseled from darkness  
The spirit of endeavor.  
Motionless it remained there;  
Except the outline of a pencil,  
Like a magic wand,  
Moved to and fro,  
In the golden glow of the halo.

Things not understood are masters.  
Fears are built from unknown quantities.  
They fall by analysis.  
To calm myself I called the form a man.  
It was the light that puzzled me.

Cautious, in fear my step upon the floor  
Would stir him from his theme  
And rising up would banish me  
From a sacred scene;—

Or worse,  
Would vanish from the world of real,  
A phantom of my fear,  
And slay the hope of sympathy,  
From touch of kind,  
That the form had promised me.  
I moved toward him.

Oh, sacred things of common stuff!  
A bit of string,  
A tallow mass,  
A candle made the light for me.  
My soul raised up,  
I almost sang.  
A burst of sudden glee,  
A rush of joy,  
A peaceful quiet,  
Fought with the fear in me.

As I stepped into the light  
The pencil that had labored in the glow  
Trembled in a palsied hand.  
Perplexed, it wavered  
Then like a stricken thing  
Lay idle on the theme.

The form arose from a rustic bench  
And stood a bit confused.  
His hair, untrimmed, was almost white  
And rumpled in a mass,  
His beard a stubble field of grey.

His chin dropped down,  
He stood as in dismay.  
He stared at me,  
A gawky wretch of woe,  
His garments tattered, worn and soiled,  
Unkempt,  
A filthy man;  
And in the presence of a being  
More wretched yet than I;—  
I laughed from a mature void of sympathy,  
I ridiculed his plight,  
And mirth borne from an empty soul  
Resounded on the cavern walls  
And echoed back, a dismal sound,  
For he, the object of my merriment,  
Stood up, a princely man,  
As straight and sturdy as a knight.  
His eyes lit up from fire within,  
But still as cold as piercing steel,  
And froze the laughter on my face  
Into a silly grin.

The thin line of his lips  
Held back a stern rebuke.  
And poise of him  
Outshone the garments that he wore.  
While I,  
Before the equilibrium he sustained,  
Swayed and trembled  
From an emptiness within.



My twitching lips,  
My shaking knees,  
Mocked at my command,  
Would not obey a wavering will.  
I prayed for death to swallow me.  
I listened for his scorching words.  
But instead  
He stretched out a toil-scarred hand,  
His lips grew full and round,  
More caressing than a smile.  
The light within his eyes grew soft,  
But his soothing words were lost.  
He drew me down upon a bench.  
His kindness enveloped me.  
And with the rude blanket that he wore  
Enrobed my storm-drenched form.  
Then in careful tenderness  
Dipped the tallow near the flame  
And oiled my bleeding hands.

Eased from pain  
Yet morbid as a child  
Who has transgressed,  
On the altars of sacrifice,  
Is bathed in tenderness  
Known only in a kindred breast,  
I grieved in the touch of tenderness  
Not from a wound, or pain,  
But that the moment that I erred  
Could not be given back again.

Perhaps it is better so  
That time is now,  
And moments gone  
Have left their mark  
For weal or woe,  
That "I" and "Now"  
Is all of consciousness.  
The past is moulded into form,  
Chiseled on the types of kind,  
Painted on the seasons' breath,  
And assimilates for me  
A power from forces gone.  
The future radiates from now  
Into an unmarked zone,  
And only faith illuminates beyond,  
So note the errors you make to day,  
Impress them on your mind  
As moments squandered here.  
Accomplishments keep their own display  
Engraved upon the span of time.

A great resolve of better things  
Was born within my will.  
I faced the coward I had been  
And bid the fear be still.  
I drew the sword of confidence  
And aimed a blow at dread.  
I met the dragon of my fear  
And sheared his hateful head.  
I looked the hermit in the eye.

I watched his soul expand,  
As if he knew my confidence  
And counted me a man.  
He grasped my hand in glad delight.  
I stood as straight as he  
And knew the joy when man to man  
Extends a sympathy.

Exalted far beyond the wreck of me,  
An armoured knight,  
Chartered with the will to be,  
Became the stronger of the two.  
I vowed a common weal with him.  
We knew a common trust.  
His was born from love of kind.  
Mine was born from lust.

In the new-born strength  
I knew no dread.  
An egotist who held the faith  
To be greater than its source  
Built worlds on which to tread.  
Became myself a thing of dread  
For lesser things than I.  
I looked beyond our candlelight  
Into the blackness of the night,  
For worlds to conquer and enthrall,  
And saw two coals of fire.  
A beast was creeping from its lair  
Within the cavern wall.

The worlds that I had built,  
The conquest to be done,  
The plunder of a vanquished foe.  
That bloody battles won,  
Faded in our candlelight.  
My armor crumpled from a blow  
Dealt by fear within,  
Clattered on the rocky floor.  
And I, a naked thing of doubt  
From realms of faith cast out,  
Into the blackness of despair  
Fell upon the neck of him.  
I withered in a dread.  
I pleaded in his ear.  
I cried upon his breast.  
I prayed forgiveness.  
I begged for tenderness.

The fiery embers coming near  
First seemed low upon the floor  
Then higher in the air.  
A beast that stalked its prey  
Advanced with stealthy tread.  
Scarce a pace beyond our light  
The fiery orbs stood still,  
Now settling low,  
Again they pause,  
Then soaring up  
Suspended in mid air,  
Became scorching flames

Set in a dim outline of dread.  
A demon's avalanche of teeth and claws  
Seemed sailing at my head.

"It springs," I gasped,  
And with a madman's fear  
Dropped the blanket from my form  
And crouched to meet the coming foe  
With muscles in a strain  
And head set low.  
Conflict shielded me from self.  
A sacrifice was I.  
Hope aspires on carnage of the foe.  
Doubt, you yield and die.

My heart beat steady in my breast  
And throbbing flow in extended veins  
Cleared my brain.  
And made my nerves a thing of steel.  
Fearless I would meet the thing  
But not from common weal.  
I knew a selfishness.

Rigid in a single aim;  
To meet the death that threatened me,  
I met the glowing orbs with mine  
That flashed a battle fire.  
I knew no bounds, no shape or form.  
I strove to read its nature  
By the light within its fiery eye.

I read a challenge;—It or me;  
And from the savage breast of them,  
Who stalked the wilderness for prey,  
Who struggled then, for me and now,  
Who yielded from the pride of self,  
To call adversaries such as they.  
To meet a common foe,  
I called into the realms of time  
That who should hear  
Would quit his trail  
And lend a hand to conquer it  
That conquered me  
Or minister to my wounded form  
And share the victory.

It, that gives the call of kind,  
Pleads a common cause.  
It perishes an individual thing  
But blending with the hope of them,  
That succor to its fall,  
Lives communal toward a common aim.

A single word was echoed out.  
It was "help."  
Let him who laughs at me  
Forget the ego of his soul  
And listen to the prophecies  
In the whispers of posterity.  
"Unite your power  
With power of kind



To better serve your day;  
For all must pass  
As wasted wrecks,  
That life anew  
May find its subsistence  
From failure and decay,  
And carve into the monuments  
Of efforts gone  
A deeper sense,  
A truer line,  
And softer tints  
For future time."

I called into the realms of kind  
To bear me up  
And claim by victory  
The strongest force  
As seeds to time,  
And all of power to live and do  
Surged for a mighty blow.  
I would spend it all  
To stand a victor unafraid  
Or be a prostrate prey  
Before a stronger foe.

Overwhelmed, I settled down  
A lifeless heap upon the floor.  
The beast had issued a call of kind  
And set to riot  
My forces of defence.

No claws or teeth  
Had torn my flesh  
Nor blow had fallen me  
But being what I did least expect  
It had vanquished me.

I sank from shame  
And humbly prayed  
That none should hear  
The call I gave.  
A burro of the common kind  
That has made men laugh  
By mock sagaciousness,  
Won his sympathy  
With doleful mien,  
Borne his burdens,  
Held his trust  
With its ever present docileness,  
Had lifted up its head  
And brayed.

Shamed by his searching eye  
And withered by his word  
I wished that I could die  
Or have reproof deferred.

"Oh, wretched night!  
I die by what I do not comprehend;—  
But yet, knowledge can not withstay  
The touch of death.

As I proceed  
I feel its breath;—  
And if I knew all things  
I could but discern  
That time is now  
And touch is consciousness.

“It is well to live and learn,  
By touch of circumstance,  
Of fear  
With which death touches us,  
And as we meet its challenge  
Dispel its dreadfulness,  
Build ourselves a greater power,  
Mould our courage to defy.  
The threats of ignorance  
That fear the hour  
When we must die.

“He who analyzes right  
Walks more fully in the light,  
But makes of one a multitude.  
Division can not reach an end.  
He starts an endless chain  
Who does explain  
That this is that,  
And so;—and yon  
And divides each into a smaller part;  
Anon;—anon  
His endless search for perfect blend

Is fallacy.  
His work is never done.  
He has in each a mystery  
As great as he who holds  
That one is all,  
And all is one,  
But builds himself a wider field,  
A brighter light,  
A truer sense of might and right.  
Bends the powers to his will,  
Knows more surely he is he,  
But in the presence of forces diversified  
Feels it less.  
Submerges greed in sympathy.  
Blends his power with tenderness.”  
He accused me, “You are afraid.”

“My nerves are gone.”

“What feared you;—death?”

“Death I would have welcomed.  
It is not that I go,  
But what I leave by going,  
Or that I stay,  
But what I find by staying.”

“You have duties and dependents  
That would be poorly served by others?”

"No."

"Then what mourns in your death,  
Or grieves you in life?"

"Nothing."

"It is well said.

Emptiness is extermination.

There is no regret in turmoil.

No pain in conflict.

Neither a balm for soundness,

Nor inspiration from satisfaction,

Nor reward for idleness.

A ship goes out to sea empty,

Is lightly tossed.

The crew is idle on the deck,

Morbid in a fancied gale,

But loath to land,

For port or harbor

Has no welcome

For such an empty hull.

But load her down

With precious weight,

Submerge her water line.

She rides an even keel

And singing sailors laugh at toil.

They mock at storm.

They sight a goal beyond.

He who idly counts time  
Lives not by his own power  
But reckons with the graciousness  
Of preordained destiny.  
Before you have lived  
You made others aware of life  
By touch that promised.  
If you fulfill that promise  
You have earned the right to die,  
But idly to spend,  
From the coffers of our day,  
The chattles of our kin,  
To enslave another power  
For pleasure's end  
Is to use resources  
(The tools of time)  
For immunity from interests of kind.  
To purchase ease  
You spend opportunity  
And there is delivered to you  
Extermination.  
Who has not served  
May surely dread to die."

He turned and kissed the comic face.  
The donkey brayed.  
I laughed and thought;  
Two hermits of a kind.

"It is well you laugh.  
It shows some confidence.  
He who laughs seems to say  
Even I am not so depraved as they,  
The objects of the merriment.  
One embraces among things present  
That which seems most worthy.  
Still I have need of you."  
Remembering that I was present,  
I humbly asked  
"What would you have me do?"

"Would you, with a better knowledge,  
Write an evener grace into the lines  
And, with your strength,  
Aid Solomon and I  
In the necessary labors.  
Then I will give to you  
All that we may accomplish."

"I will lend you money."

"You would buy with gold,  
The pride that want has willed me.  
I perceived in you  
Not a means to an end  
But a continuation of an ideal.  
I have submerged myself  
To write the story of failure.

Unless you can see, in failure,  
The force of progress,  
The cause of endeavor,  
The continuation of hope,  
The inspiration of action,  
The reason of existence,  
Even the cause of the universe,  
You can not aid me.  
I hoped you would prove superior  
But you are less in my ideal  
Than the donkey who works with me.

"Things existing are stepping-stones.  
One looks,  
And observes the world he lives in,  
Or listens and hears its sound,  
Touches and knows its consistency,  
Breathes and hales its aroma,  
Partakes and becomes a part of it.  
He is neither doomed or destined  
But builds himself into the structure  
Or else does not use his endowments.

"Man may master all things.  
Born of conscious effort  
Is past conscious typified.  
Is endowed with faculties  
That will perceive the present.  
Endeavors and accomplishes a future.



Or idly consumes the waste  
From the march of progress.

"Things preceding the present  
Are foundations on which to labor  
Or monuments to endeavor.  
Beyond is utter darkness.  
Perhaps an undefined obstruction  
That must be chiseled away.  
Surely an abyss yawns beneath  
But can be no deeper or more dense,  
Than the depths and darkness  
Out of which man has ascended.

"All is darkness  
Except as conscious beings  
Have illumed it by endeavor.  
Beneath man is an abyss  
Out of which he ascended.  
Above him a mountain  
Where he receives substance  
Unillumed, untouched, unanalyzed  
But of ample consistency  
To raise his foundation  
If it is well chosen.

"No defined limits  
Are ascribed to the mountain  
Or certain dimensions  
Or outline of form

Or given consistency.  
It is shrouded in darkness  
But from its bulk  
Can be obtained material  
That will yield to analysis  
When torn from the darkness  
And resting on the foundation  
Which is illumed by reason.  
If unfit for higher construction  
Can be tumbled into the abyss.

"At first this seems useless.  
But listen;—  
As the waste plunges downward  
A sound comes back from the abyss.  
Labor on, have faith,  
And the stones you have discarded  
Will build up in the abyss  
To the level of your efforts.  
And should you not raise the level,  
You have extended the fields  
Of enlightened endeavor."

"For what should I labor?"

"A greater light."

"To what end?"

"Darkness."

"Then why labor?  
There is dignity to preserve."

"You would be a glamorous godhead.  
That which only glitters  
Must surely be reflection.  
The source of light illumines  
And warms as it consumes.  
Who chases his shadow  
Catches it at high noon,  
But has nothing,  
And has lost the glory of promise.  
He dares not forsake a beaten trail.  
His shadow is swallowed by obstruction.  
He must veer around.  
At his zenith he is barren.  
He must turn,  
If he would still pursue it  
Now an ever lengthening hallucination,  
A phantom,  
That leads him on to evening,  
And again;—nothing,  
It has vanished in darkness.

"He who seeks the source  
That makes his being perceptible  
Has an endless journey.  
He perishes a failure  
But is ever hopeful in the promise.  
Becomes powerful and certain

In conflict with obstruction  
And absorbed at noontide,  
In the brilliancy of promise,  
Knows not that he turned at the zenith.  
He is aware of less obstruction,  
For he has cleared a path  
For his declining day.  
His goal is lost  
But did not vanish.  
It continued beyond the horizon  
When darkness obscured his vision.

"Only those who have purpose  
Endeavor to retain endowments.  
To accomplish ideals that promise.  
To serve all things that serve him.  
His reward is failure.  
Endowments must be re-endowed  
Or absorbed in idleness.  
Ideals never quite attained  
Else he be consumed,  
But to accomplish  
One labors from base to aim.  
The base is always now.  
The tools, all things perceptible.  
Aim is the promise  
That contact has conceived.

"If the surface where you labor  
Is not well illumed

You will stumble  
And be lost in the abyss;  
Or a stone from the mountain  
May tumble and crush you,  
Then those near you  
Will pause to level the surface,  
And leave your level of endeavor  
As a step for others.  
Thus you live beyond consciousness  
In the consciousness of others,  
Are a power in their endeavors,  
Inhabit their day.  
Attain with their efforts  
The joy in the promise  
From that mystic light  
That shines from a great height  
But illumines only the foundation  
And steps that descend to the abyss.

“Continually man has labored  
Towards the source of illumination,  
Or extended the steps  
That lead into the abyss  
To illumine the way  
For beings not yet ascended  
Into visible accomplishments.  
And he who labors at either extreme  
Becomes, himself,  
A part of the radiance.”

"What is life, and what death?"

"Life is light, death darkness."

"What light, and what darkness?"

"To analyze darkness  
Is to perceive its substance.  
To perceive it,  
It must be illumed.  
Illumed, darkness does not exist.

"To analyze light  
Is to discern its forces.  
To discern is to liberate.  
To liberate extinguishes.  
Extinguished, does not exist,  
But its forces are manifest  
In all things perceptible."

"But if I do not endeavor?"

"If you would cast your lot  
With scum on tides of endeavor,  
Froth of idleness,  
Maggots of decay,  
Stink of decomposition,  
Defilers of heritage,  
Profaners of posterity,  
Thieves of time,  
Then perish like bubbles of your kind;

Bask in the brilliance of light,  
Burst and be gone."

In anger he reproved me.  
"Go!" he shouted.  
"Go, the storm is lifted.  
Go, find your self in endeavor."

His fiery eyes scorched me.  
The bony accusing finger  
Pierced the marrow of my bones.  
His tongue lashed me,  
I feared his wisdom,  
And edging out of the cavern  
I welcomed the wrath of elements.  
Crouched through the forest  
Oppressed by forebodings.  
Uncertain if destiny had doomed me.

The storm hung high above,  
Like a heavy shroud.  
Over the green forest  
That wailed a great sorrow  
Beneath the gloom of the storm  
Which flashed a fire of destruction,  
In contempt more than anger,  
And played on the green of the pine  
A consuming light  
That searched the secret recesses,

As if the forest did not offend,  
But concealed the object of vengeance.

Weakness guided me;  
Through the same aisles I ascended.  
Strength seeks no precedent.  
Strength is the courage to continue  
In the analysis of failure.  
Failure is the absence of the real  
That one conceives in vision.  
To discern the liberated quantity  
Would be success.

Vision incites action to attain,  
But attained would consume  
And leave no power to conceive.  
However, who proceeds  
Needs only vision.  
He who returns  
Has lost the vision  
And seeks promise  
In a new conception.

Perhaps, I reasoned,  
The hermit is right.  
I will go labor with him.  
For it is better  
To be a partner of a donkey  
Than a parasite on hereditary lien.



Again I climbed the mountain,  
Waded rushing torrents,  
Labored through entanglements,  
Unmindful of obstruction.  
I arrived flush with hope  
And entered the mouth of the cavern.

The flames burned low on the candle.  
It flickered and fluttered.  
It danced and disappeared,  
To flash up again  
And blink and jump and shimmer.  
While shadows like ghosts imprisoned  
Grimaced and grinned  
In grewsome maneuvers  
As they danced in the cavern.

On the floor of the cavern  
Was the hermit  
Struggling to rise,  
To fall again  
And tear at the neck of his garments.  
To fight and struggle and fall.  
Trembling as a ship grounded  
Is torn between storm and its mooring.  
Cast without pilot if free  
On an uncharted ocean  
And clings to the reef  
In hope of resurrection.

As I came forward,  
A trembling moment he stared,  
As if uncertain of vision.  
But in that moment  
Searched depths in my nature  
Unillumed by human touch before  
And lit in me  
A spark of common sympathy.

He feebly arose  
And seated himself at the table.  
Slow and deliberate he wrote  
As of a great truth  
That must be accurately weighed  
To ascertain its value  
Then looked out into the shadows.  
Attentively listening  
As if he awaited  
A long delayed arrival.  
Arose smiling  
As one who welcomes a visitor.  
Leaned again over his papers  
And hurriedly signed a name.  
Stood again erect,  
A soldier at attention,  
And seemed of a great height  
And a glorious magnificence,  
As the flames on the candle  
Became even and steady  
And illumed the cavern

As it expanded  
Then as if caught by a gust of wind,  
Was gone.

There was a thud upon the floor,  
An echo in the rocky cavern.  
I strained my eyes.  
I called.  
I listened.  
Outside was the subdued rumble.  
On the western horizon  
A thin streak of clear sky.  
The rest was;—  
Gloom and me.

Who has not watched the pall of death  
Settle on a friend  
And asked of life:  
Why this end?  
And heard it answer back for them,  
It is victory  
Not for them,  
But for aim,  
If you keep the pledge  
Your friendship gave.

The sound of storm died away.  
The clouds lifted.  
Until the sun shone full  
And interred the mouth of the cavern

And transformed it  
Into an enchanted chamber.

Brown stone walls studded with crystal  
Caught the rays of sun  
And flung them  
One to the other  
Magnified, glorified and hurried.  
A silver light  
Tinted with purple and pink  
Of such delicate proportions  
To be scarcely more than suggestions  
And revealed;  
Only death and silence.

On a table where the candle had burned  
Was a remnant of charred cord.  
On the floor the hermit lay  
Still but strangely powerful.  
Near his outstretched hand  
A folder lay open.

A face smiled up at me.  
It was neither girl nor woman  
But a combination that merged them.  
Sad but smiling,  
Wistful yet doubtful.  
Pleasant but stern in a purpose.  
A bud endeavoring to blossom  
But shadowed from the sunlight.

Touched by a sense of the sacred,  
I placed the folder  
Over the heart of the hermit,  
Drew a blanket over his garments,  
Smoothed the hair,  
Spoke to him and listened.  
I was praying.  
Touched his cheek.  
Sought the outstretched hand  
And caressed it.  
Saw in its palm  
A crystal drop of water.  
I wept;  
And in the tear from my weeping  
Observed a covenant;  
As past to present sacrifices,  
As life to death endeavors,  
As time to eternity hopes,  
As you to me have given,  
So will I  
Give of you to time.

Who weeps a tear  
Has pledged, as I,  
Himself to a cause  
With time and death.  
He reasons,  
It is not best,  
Still he knows  
They laugh to ridicule,

Who see the old  
Persist beyond the new,  
Time is no true respecter  
Of persistence,  
But of power  
Nor of age  
But of accomplishments.

Collecting the papers  
I went out for aid.  
I thought of beastly marauders  
And wondered what protection  
I could place before the cavern.

As I debated,  
Solomon came out of the forest  
And I willed him a sacrifice.  
I would tie him in the opening  
And reasoned  
That beasts attracted  
Would be detained  
Over the carcass of the burro.

Before I reached the sacrifice  
A rumble  
That quickened to a crashing roar  
Chilled my soul,  
Cursed my aim  
And overshadowed me  
With threats of dire malediction.

I turned to the cliff  
From where the sound seemed to come.  
No opening yawned above me.  
No entrance remained to the grotto.  
The cliff rock had crumbled.  
As if it had stood thus for ages,  
A dwarfed and gnarled cedar  
Crested the mound of boulders  
That closed the mouth of the cavern.

Above the mound of débris  
The shafts from a setting sun  
Played through the branches  
Of a mistletoe-laden cedar  
And cast shadows on the cliff rock.  
The features of an old man,  
Creased with lines of care,  
Trembled as if to impart  
A last hopeful message  
Then seemed to smile  
And receded in the twilight  
As the sun sank down  
Behind the purple of mountains  
And sheened the rugged line of horizon  
In the glory of promise.

## FAITH

When you're down and things oppress you,  
And the world is looking blue,  
When your honest obligation  
Is more than is due to you,  
Set your working standards higher  
Than they were before your fall,  
For the chances are your interests  
Did not meet your aim at all.

Far above a clear perception  
Is the true perspective kept,  
And it's not the less enticing  
If you've made a slight misstep.  
There's a halo left to failure  
That illumines the darkest night;  
If you keep your vision glowing  
Faith will set the world all right.

If your vision will not merit  
More than failure's darkest toll,  
Tear it down and build another  
From the substance of your soul.  
Encompass all the arc above you;  
Build an aim; strive to do it,  
And its brilliance is not shadowed  
From angles you must view it.



Buckle down and keep on striving.  
If you fail no one can say,  
That you did not spend an effort  
That was worthy of your day.  
That you fail is not considered.  
Time will not your work defame,  
If you keep the arc encompassed  
As the substance of your aim.

## FAILURE

Upon the carefree plains of youth  
He spied a mystic dream,  
Resolved himself to follow it  
Down life's enchanted stream.  
The vision capped a nearby knoll  
Above the shady surge  
Of waters, where the common run  
Of human aims submerge.

But still the thoughtless one delayed  
His journey to the hill.  
His ambition said, you must go.  
His answer was, I will,  
Until his manhood spied again  
The vision high above,  
Upon the mountain slope of time  
Entwined with care and love.

But still the thoughtless one delayed  
His journey to the hill.  
His ambition said, you must go.  
His answer was, I will,  
Until his longing spied again  
The vision far ahead,  
Haloed in glory high above  
The mountain top of dread.

But still the thoughtless one delayed  
His journey to the hill.

His ambition said, you must go.  
His answer was, I will,  
Until in later life there came  
The mountain into view,  
Black-crested with foreboding clouds.  
Dark dread was all he knew.

The pleasant stream became a tide;  
A seething, surging foam  
Of struggling beings now denied  
A faith or hope or home.  
The pleasant shady nooks are gone.  
The vision it has fled.  
An angry tide now breaks upon  
The barren slopes of dread.

## SORROW

Rasp across my waking time  
The thorny piercing bough,  
Blur upon my conscious mind  
The things before me now,  
Hover hope beneath the outspread wing,  
Blot vision from the air;  
Suspended, a craven thing,  
O'er the pits of despair.

Image of an unfilled trust,  
Heap on my burdened pack  
Censure of eternal dust  
From those I can't bring back.  
I, a fledgling from your thorny nest,  
Hatched neath your dreaded wings,  
Weary of your spell, would rest  
Myself from grewsome things.

Cast high, as a buzzard poised,  
Over the plains of death,  
Shadows all but bleak bones,  
And my own wretchedness.  
Glimmering lights of the promised stars,  
The trusts I did not meet,  
Fanned to life through pinion bars  
Are phantoms indiscreet.

Yonder mound of bleaching bones  
Like shadows cast me o'er.  
Departed trust shrieks and moans  
My failures to deplore.  
While my weary soul calls from afar  
That I should join it there,  
My shadowed life bears the scar  
That misery must share.

I strive to crest promised mounds,  
A beast-like serpent sits  
With horny clams to tear me down  
Into the darkened pits;  
It pierces me with its wicked thrust,  
And points my eye to stray  
To the bleaching bones of trust  
That I would put away.

Alone I grope neath the wings,  
Before the beast I cower,  
I fear the bird that ne'er sings,  
I fear the serpent's power.  
But the glimmer of the star was might,  
I sheared the dragons head,—  
Cleft the pinions through to light  
In honor of the dead.

The shadow was my weakened will,  
The buzzard my deceit,

Beasts that dragged me down the hill  
Were mire upon my feet.  
From out my soul were the shadows cast,  
The bird in me did live,  
Departed ones, could I ask,  
My failures would forgive.

## THE WIND

Shadowed forebodings stealthily creep  
Over hopes we have sworn to keep,  
Duty lags and superstition sends  
The hollow prophecy of winds  
To masquerade as destiny,  
Transforming hope to misery.  
O hollow winds, be still,  
Your wail has power to chill  
A mind that stands a gale of fact  
If it be free to act—and die.  
Speak your worst in truth.  
But do not prophesy.

Breathe your worst in storm and cold,  
Speak the death you dare withhold  
Behind the veil of prophecy;  
Whistle, mutter, groan and shriek,  
Moan and wail, bang and squeak;  
Tear the lock-stops from the door;  
Shake the windows to the floor;  
Twist the gables; bare the roof;  
Sway the trees; work reproof  
Upon the things that dare defy  
Your call to death;  
But do not prophesy.

Whirl and eddy, scream and puff,  
Threaten, bluster, storm and bluff,

I mock your lusting ire.  
Rattle, clamor, shake and twist,  
Moan and murmur, howl and hiss,  
Weight my mind with your fact,  
Burden me and damn my act;  
But muffled whispers, messengers of woe,  
Hush—the life that burned so low  
Has heard a call above your cry,  
Bring despair and solitude,  
But do not prophesy.

Howl and shriek your weirdest call,  
“Death the heritage of all.”  
Blatant mimic of the true;  
Nip the bud that strives to bloom,  
Now shadowed from the moon  
By yon stone slab that marks the mound  
Where my eternal thoughts are bound  
In keeping of an unfilled trust;  
Freeze my life blood if you must,  
But ne’er suggest, eternal hope a lie.  
Challenge me with death,  
But do not prophesy.

Through lonesome hours of bitter tears  
Your hollow sounds have filled my ears.  
Prophet of the grewsome tale,  
Whip my garments to a thread,  
Tangle locks upon my head.  
Perhaps some good is wrought



By the stinging blasts which brought  
This bitter plight to me.  
Speak, unbind me from your prophecy!  
Curse your power, let me die!  
Shelter me with death,  
But do not prophesy.

The hollow winds have gone.  
I see the wreckage they have strewn  
As morning gilds the sky.  
Vile wreck that fear has made of me,  
Unmindful of the hollow prophecy  
I still will cool the fevered lip,  
Reset the plant the cold winds nip,  
Build a housing for my trust,  
Breast against the strongest gust,  
Match its fury will for will.  
The blasts may bring death,  
But the hollow winds are still.

## GRADUATION

So at last the day has dawned,  
Promised day for which I pawned  
Many active years of strife,  
To balance my aim in life  
With knowledge ordained by fact  
In deciphered cause and act,  
And revelations that wrest  
Superstition from my breast,  
Giving reason to my mind  
Proving fact with cause and time.

Welcome graduation day;  
Mile-post on the upward way;  
Cast my power upon the beams  
Where the real is weighed with dreams,  
As the hourglass drops its sand  
Steady through an ample span  
That the reaper stays his blade  
From the efforts I have made  
To blend with my destiny  
A light for posterity.

Selfish power to me it seemed  
Crushed the visions that I dreamed,  
Until in studies I cleft  
Shadows that concealed myself,  
And through shadows where I slept,  
An inspiring light has crept

To illume a pathway out  
From the shadows of my doubt,  
To a more constructive view  
Where in fact my dreams come true.

Maps and charts and printed page,  
By Philosopher and Sage,  
Chained me down through hours that roll  
Dark across my unschooled soul,  
While instructors, sorely tried,  
Worked in patience by my side,  
Served in battles grimly fought,  
Opened up a field of thought,  
Made my bondage liberty,  
Bound the past, a slave to me.

Instructors of ages gone  
Marked a trail to walk upon,  
Weighed worth in sayings of sooth,  
Marked the way with simple truth,  
Laid of fact and tested rule  
The corner-stone of the school;  
Dreamed, but tore their dreams apart,  
Mastered and preserved their art,  
Wrote into the sacred creeds  
Causes and effects of deeds.

Bold defenders bravely died,  
They passed soldiers of defense  
Proud in power, but killed their pride;

Seeking truth as recompense,  
Now the school defends for me  
Honored fields that set them free.  
Still no honors can I claim  
In fair education's name  
Till by truth's enlightenment  
I attain accomplishment.

Dear old school! your image still  
Is acrest the promised hill,  
Inspiration built across  
The shadowed path that I lost  
At your call that bade me climb  
From the murk and clinging slime,  
Through the portals of your door  
To the real in dreams of yore.  
Now a call that bids me do,  
But old school! I honor you.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE WEST

Vibrant with life's synthetic thrills  
And poised above the base deceit,  
Fair spirit of the wooded hills  
Enthroned where plain and mountains meet;

Poised by the streams where shadows, rent  
By searching sunbeams, do reveal  
The care your throbbing heart has lent  
In anguish that you would conceal;

Bathed in conflicts of selfish end  
Where hope denied explored in vain  
And built in failure greater men  
Instilled with universal aim—

Tolerance is your social bond,  
But justice to the wayward aim  
Is written on the magic wand  
That yields the power in your domain.

Alike servant's and master's brow  
Know the soothing of your caress.  
Alike the weak and strong must bow  
Before your justice and redress.

Built in contact with your beauty,  
And led through ruins of ages gone,

Man may step aside from duty,  
But, inspired, he will still strive on.

In your lofty mountains hide him  
When'er his soul is sorely tried,  
And the patience self denied him  
Will work again with civic pride.

Or cast him on your desert plain  
And let him search his soul, alone,  
Until he finds his care and pain  
Are but the markings of his own.

Stretch out your hand and welcome all,  
The weary, the hopeful and the weak;  
Prostrate, the hurried selfish call  
Where striving man and nature speak.

Tranfuse in sympathy and love  
The vengeful aim and selfish fight,  
And wave your symbols high above,  
Inscribed in honor, truth and right.

Hold up the wand and symbols fair,  
With grace and dignity defend  
Each worthy cause, and loud declare  
The common weal of mortal men.

The frail disciple of despair,  
Led through your ruins and storied land,

Half timid ventures, but your care  
Sends him out a stronger man.

Fair goddess of the brave and strong,  
Mother to the weak; who are blessed;  
And blessing all the passing throng  
Impart the spirit of the west.

## THE RECKONING

Latent moment, despoiler of my day,  
Shrouded phantom, of the knelling lay,  
Ghostly demon, shadow from the deep,  
Ghastly death mask, murderer of sleep,  
Morbid perpetrator, intruder of my bower,  
Stealthy marauders of the silent hour,  
Unrobe! I heed your silent beckoning.  
Today was mine, but now the reckoning.

Brilliant the morning broke with light.  
Full strong my being filled with might  
Trode forth the master of my will;  
Conquered all, and was master still.  
But now the victims of my might,  
As dancing phantoms, haunt my night;  
And I, dethroned, am doomed forsooth  
To spend a silent hour with truth.

I knew no thought except of greed;  
"Might is right," as my only creed;  
Has proved a truth the things that lie  
Destroyed come back to testify  
To living things that know me still;  
My weakness is my selfish will;  
Each deed has wrung from me its toll  
And carved its image on my soul.

A power combined of lesser things  
Controls the destiny of kings,



Feeds the weakling and molds the mob,  
Spreads the laughter and brings the sob,  
Leads the armies, and turns the tide  
Of selfishness to civic pride;  
Tips the balance in love and hate,  
Measures destiny, seals our fate.

In silent hours we may discern  
That worth must hold the place we earn.  
It is the bond of sympathy  
That measures worth and destiny.  
Worth I alone can not conceive.  
'Tis things my fellow beings believe  
My acts and aims to typify  
That weigh the egotistic I.

Latent moment, balance of my day,  
Ghostly demon, shadow of my way,  
Stealthy marauder, my unshackled creed,  
Morbid perpetrator, portrait of my deed,  
Dreadful death mask, image of my will,  
Direful dirge, echo of voices stilled,  
Portray my deeds; tune the sounds to sorrow  
That I may softer tread tomorrow.

## HATE

Foul beast within my aching brain  
Tear its substance into shreds,  
Destroy the will lest I refrain  
From the vengeance I have said.

Ah! will it, that ere I shall pass  
The thing that I hate shall cringe,  
And of my hopeless mercy ask,  
In the dark hour of revenge.

I saw its touch upon the flower,  
Then I watched it kneel and pray;  
Now I deny the blossom's power,  
And despise a godly way.

Strong set within my enraged mind  
Is the passion to destroy.  
Blot out all peace until I find  
Its destruction and my joy.

Mistrust shall rest upon its deed,  
My curse is on its every act,  
Destruction of its work my creed,  
Until it is dead in fact.

Tear loose the shackles from desire,  
Release the manacles that hold.  
Then cast my soul into the fire.  
Foul destruction is my goal.

## THE MORNING GLORY

Suspended from the cottage eaves,  
Like a wood nymph's colonnade,  
Netted masses of vine and leaves  
Conceal the windows in their shade.

The tiny, tender, twisted buds,  
In the green leaves hid away,  
Peek out to see the merry floods  
Of sunbeams that dance and play.

When time was young, the legends say,  
North wind with the sun did wrest,  
From the earliest break of day,  
Till the sun sank in the west.

Then the weary bold contenders  
Made a truce above the day.  
One demand the sun should render  
And the north wind it should lay.

All the blossoms shall be blighted  
Of the forests' fairy green,  
Then our quarrel it is righted,  
Till the white frost nips the green.

On the morning lithe and nimble,  
The sunbeams crept through the trees;  
Set the blossoms all atremble,  
And the buds curled in the breeze.

From the glow above the sunset,  
Now the fairies roll at eve,  
A myriad tiny budlets,  
And conceal them in the leaves.

What of legend or of story;  
Naught in life can well define  
The mystery or the glory  
Of the morning glory vine.

Perhaps the fairies in the night,  
With a tiny magic wand,  
Paint the blossoms by the star light  
And are gone before the dawn.

But the cottage, it is nearer  
To an omnipotent plan,  
In eternal hope is dearer,  
Dearer to the heart of man.

How soft the true hearts beat within.  
With the blossoms smiling through,  
Calmly willing that life should end,  
As the morning lifts the dew.

There's a message in their dying  
That enshrines the lowly dead.  
Life is not in time defying,  
But in happiness we spread.

## DOBY

Oasis of the desert plain;  
Enfold my weary form again  
While I watch your wondrous spell  
Over the seed and buds that swell,  
And listen to the birds that sing  
Their joyous heralding of spring.  
I feel a power within my soul.  
The power that makes the buds unfold,  
At Doby.

From lattice shades of leafless trees  
I watch the white clouds in the breeze.  
Soft floating fancies drifting by  
Unrobe my soul beneath the sky.  
Nature shouts yet I dare not speak,  
For as the sun plays hide and seek  
With taunting mysteries in my blood,  
New life unfolds from seed and bud,  
At Doby.

I watched in Autumn's listless wise;  
The blackbirds from the cattails rise,  
Full fledged, to congregate and fly;  
I missed the Killdee's plaintive cry;  
And soon I wakened from a night  
To watch a world, veneered in white,  
Droop sad before a rising sun,

While I my journey had begun  
At Doby.

Lone wanderer, prodigal, spent,  
Weary traveler, homeward sent,  
The blackbird, in the cattails brown  
A Summer's nesting place has found;  
Flits its wings; cocks its head askew;  
Then calls and sings as if it knew  
The secrets of the seed and bud  
Astir beneath the black marsh mud  
At Doby.

Nature's call will arouse to might  
The dormant things touched with her light;  
Then up from yonder coast-way thread  
Weary travelers, bring their bed  
To sleep beneath the spreading trees,  
And build anew from what one sees  
Through vernal hallways thrown upright  
By leaf and branch against the night,  
At Doby.

Weary traveler, homage take  
Where lavish nature strives to make  
An emblem to her graciousness,  
Amid the somber spaciousness  
Of desert plains that expand  
With thirst-parched grass and barren land,  
Where mirages may lead astray,

But nature waves a welcome day,  
At Doby.

Here the weary travelers find  
A sheltered nook to rest their mind,  
To test their faith, and prove their will.  
They find themselves, but linger still  
Where barren deserts' somber hue  
Is flashed with colors born anew  
From growing things on marsh and sod,  
And man inspired meets nature's god  
At Doby.

## THE DEVIL'S PAN

Where the skyline meets the sand dunes  
Just across the river's bed,  
And the stagnant pools of water  
Reflect the moon over head,  
Where the Coyote sends a challenge,  
And the Owls from Dog Town call  
To the silence of the prairie  
With its silence over all,  
There the silent herdsman watches  
Through the lonesome hours of night  
As he builds a dream of promise  
In the sheen of silver light.

Yonder dune becomes a palace,  
Yonder pool a crystal lake,  
And the sage brush on the short grass  
Forms of lawn and woodland take,  
But the scene that most entraps him  
Has no substance for its base;—  
But a memory and a vision  
Of a smiling maiden's face  
Ever present in the moon light,  
Framed within the palace door,  
Reflected from the crystal lake  
That was stagnant pool before.

From the barren sandy reaches  
Of a dried-up river bed,



To the green and watered pastures,—  
Like an overhanging dread,—  
Is a task obscure and clouded  
That the strongest heart will try,  
If you limit your conception  
To the vision of the eye.  
There's a time that you must travel  
From the failure of today;  
And you need a strength of vision  
If you tread an unproved way.

May bright visions gently lead him  
From the drab and sordid truth  
To the realms of dream and promise  
That enriched his fickle youth.  
In the morning, with the daybreak,  
With the long night's vigil through,  
He will laugh and jest and banter  
As a cowboy likes to do.  
But when his lone watch is silent  
Set his longing spirit free  
As he takes the trail with cattle  
'Twixt Englewood and Ochletree.

Through the breaks along the Beaver  
To that flat and level land  
Where horizon ever rises  
To rim in the devil's pan,  
The incline reaches ever upward  
To a panoramic view

From the center of a basin  
That moves as our shadows do;  
Keeping one complete encompassed  
Down in the center of a bowl  
Where a barren, trackless desert  
Torments the imprisoned soul.

Perhaps a lake upon the skyline  
Comes to shimmer in the sun  
With its wide and sandy beaches,  
And in colors overdone  
Small villages quiet and shady,  
Or a lonely farmhouse stands,  
Or the skyline of a city  
Is outlined upon the sands.  
But the herd moves slowly onward  
As mirages disappear,  
Or change from place and outline  
As the drifting herd comes near.

Through the day a ceaseless drifting  
Where no certain trail has led,  
With the dust trail winding backward,  
And the unmarked rim ahead.  
Always in the center plodding,  
Rimmed to left and rimmed to right,  
Start at center in the morning,  
Rest at center through the night.  
Moving with no sign of progress,  
But their mood is proof of gains

As they urge the lagging cattle  
With the ballads of the plains.

Unbounded by the conscious mind  
The sheened arc of visions spread  
In slumber's peace to distant realms  
Where no mortal dares to tread.  
Then the ideal of perfection  
Spreads over the devil's pan,  
Millennial presentations,  
And a guiding Angel's hand  
Leads the reckless cowboy dreamer  
Through the blossom-bordered lane  
Where youth unchecked profaned his dream  
And denied his youthful aim.

By mistakes he gains a knowledge,  
Else he sinks beneath the tide  
Of those who work at common tasks  
And hide failure with their pride.  
If he raises up above them  
He must strive to cancel out  
From mistakes and barren failures  
Consuming fear, dread and doubt.  
And his vision even failing  
Still may lead a proven man  
If he has a faith to travel  
On his failure's devil's pan.

Strong, silent men of deed and aim  
Always open up the trail,

Kind, patient men who bear their pain  
When hopes and aim seem to fail.  
With faith to tread the trackless bowl  
And withhold himself apart,  
Man finds an answer from his soul  
To conceal an anguished heart.  
Who treads in fields unmarked before  
Grows, as he, a greater man  
Twixt Cimarron and Palidor  
On his unmarked devil's pan.

## THE SPIRIT OF UNREST

A fiendish phantom of desires,  
Robed in a sparkling, spotless dress,  
Bathed in ambition's glowing fires—  
The cunning spirit of unrest.

She flaunts my efforts when I try  
A staid and useful life to lead,  
And beckons as she passes by  
To taunt my plodding with her speed.

Upon the dusty trail she trots  
With a fiendish, chuckling sound  
Murmuring of secluded spots  
Wherein content is ever found.

She points me to a hallowed nook,  
Where I should work my dearest aim.  
Then beckons on if I should look  
And laughs my simple faith to shame.

She bids me seek a greater cause  
And take my way beyond the hill;  
Yet ridicules if I should pause,—  
And sets unrest upon my will.

I caught the outline of her face—  
The death-mask of my conscious will.  
I willed my cot a goodly place  
And bid the luring call be still.

Upon himself he has no faith,  
Or trust in labor's balanced score,  
Who stops not in some quiet place  
And roams or looks beyond no more.

## TOMBOY

Besmirched urchin, unkempt and boyish clad,  
Begrimed infant, your wayward plight is sad.  
You thoughtless cast away your childish grace,  
Dauntless you mask the blossom of your face,  
Debased, deny the call of childhood's charm,  
But fearless seek to prove by strength of arm  
Yourself an answer to a mother's joy.  
Repent before it is too late, Tomboy.

Sunburned lassie, boisterous and amply strong,  
Fearless commander of the village throng  
Of mischief making imps, girl gone astray,  
Pranked in boyish maneuvers through the day,  
And tossed at night upon a downy bed  
To troubled seas or battlefields made red  
With the valiant blood of the soldier toy  
Held caressingly in your arms, Tomboy.

Brazen maiden, bedecked in scant attire,  
Pawn your simple modesty to acquire  
A masculine grace to your nymph-like form,  
Bold as a knight before a battle storm,  
Compete with man and turn his pride to shame,  
Invade his fields and beat him at his game,  
Deny his supremacy and destroy  
His watchfulness and lose his care, Tomboy.

O shameless bride, before the altar bent  
To take the pledge of life's sweet sacrament;

Unblushing, miss the symbol of the flower;  
Assured you stand, the master of the hour.  
Denied of sweet girlhood's glorious dreams  
You've built of womanhood a sphere that seems  
Sufficient tempered from the soul's alloy  
To sail the troubled seas of life, Tomboy.

Kind thoughtful mother, blessed with rapt intent  
To keep the trust life's faith in you has lent,  
Full efficient to ply your watchful care,  
Justly proud, your wondrous nature share.  
The interests of an active life have filled  
A nature sweet and strong enough to build  
A name false modesty can not destroy.  
"Mother" enshrines the edifice, "Tomboy."

Aged pilgrim, paused where death's shadows hover,  
You were urchin, lass, maid, bride, and mother.  
Wide expanded the actions of your day,  
Unbounded by what men should do and say,  
The logic of your life helped to expand  
The woman's sphere as broad as that of man.  
Victor of the unmapped seas, "Ship Ahoy,"  
All honor to your fearless voyage, Tomboy!



## JOY

There flows in each conscious mind  
A tide of power personified,  
Full strong to will what we shall find  
Of joy and grief, doubt or belief,  
As we breast the span of time,  
Always groping, searching, hoping  
For the sense and touch divine  
That will empower our conscious hour  
To be master of our kind.

With simple faith they may blend  
The story old of hidden gold,  
Concealed at the rainbow's end;  
They may not see or reckon me  
As the joy that interest lends  
To every day, in work or play,  
If I am permitted in,  
Dancing, prancing and enhancing  
Common things of common men.

From the soul the fountain flows  
That will sap or will enwrap  
The celestial spark that glows,  
In another striving brother  
As joyously on he goes,  
Smiling through some work he must do  
Before his day's work can close,  
Then with delight can enter night  
With night's peace and quiet repose.

I am joy to him who wills,  
Flowing, gushing, halting, rushing,  
Through the active life that thrills  
With a conscious might for the right,  
And denies the greed that kills  
His interests in his fellow men,  
But sips from the cup that fills  
'Neath my fountain's rainbow mountain  
That man's common effort builds.

Drenched in the sparkling spray  
Of my fountain's rainbow mountain  
Spanned across the arc of day,  
Ever crossing, dancing, tossing  
Bubbles in the bright array,  
What care I, yonder passer-by  
May jeer at my merry play  
And scurry through the mystic hue  
Of his life's enchanted way.

I partake each small delight,  
Toiling, resting, laughing, jesting,  
Balance for each act of might,  
Testing, weighing; measure paying,  
Always sponsor for the right,  
Throbbing, living, justice giving,  
Illume dark and shade the light.  
Busy working, never shirking,  
Paint the day, and calm the night.

## DOUBT

When the glamour is gone  
And the tide runs low,  
When the sun on the slope  
Wanes in fading glow;  
When brighter things of life  
Dim with pain and grief,  
When the storm-driven ship  
Veers to rocky reef;  
When life is proven not  
As our dreams have been,  
Fear affirms—life once gone  
Never comes again.

## UNCERTAINTY

What subtle substance made  
The thoughtful hour  
On divine power  
In yonder quiet shade.

Empower my mind to read.  
What is the soul?  
Power to withhold,  
Or power destined to lead?

Night comes, but still I stay  
Upon the beach  
Where wild waves reach  
To drag the beach away.

What inspiration sent  
My thoughts to drift  
To cloud-rimmed rift  
That shafts of moonbeams rent?

Those mystic beams that make  
A glow at night  
Of silver light  
Against the moon-kissed breaks!

Perhaps a Hand to guide  
A weakened boat

That powerless floats  
Upon the restless tide.

Roll waves, dash high and wide;  
My own belief,  
Like yonder reef,  
Is changing with the tide.

My soul revolts to meet  
The test of faith,  
In divine grace,  
The waves cast at my feet—

A youth from ocean's grave,  
Clasped to his breast  
A dead child rests,  
No Hand was on the wave.

Above the moonlit bay  
The wooded hills  
With echo fill.  
The grey wolf stalks for prey.

Can death alone define  
What is the soul?  
And where its goal,  
If carnal or divine?

Only the things that last  
In history

And memory  
Can linger when I'm passed.

What one can question then.  
My own concept,  
If faith is kept  
With faith of mortal man?

Fair youth who bravely died,  
'Twas chivalry,  
Not destiny,  
That gave you to the tide.

## PASSION

Unguarded course of flame  
Approach and sear desire,  
Char the substance of my aim  
In your fury of fire,  
Blot from records of my name  
The balance page of care.

Gardens that high hopes have tilled  
Droop like a withered weed,  
The fragrance from blossoms spilled  
Is lost in fumes of greed;  
Scorching tongues of flames have killed  
Harvests' promise of seed.

Hopes I threw above the past,  
Like dream ships to embark  
For visions that I had cast  
On life's eternal spark,  
Writhe before the glaring blast  
And fade from vision's arc.

The flames of my passion sin  
Surround like prison walls,  
All of life is wrapt within  
A single moment's call,  
All the things that should have been  
Are gone before my fall.

Your substance I can not discern,  
My touch you would withhold,  
'Tis your flames my soul has burned,  
'Tis glamour that enfolds;  
Your enchanting glare has burned  
The vision from my soul.

Enamored stuff, don't deny  
My touch, but pacify  
Longing nature's frenzied cry;  
Your flames do not satisfy.  
Bear my touch, enhance my eye,  
Envelop, though I die.



## THE PASSING MOMENTS

Time with power to defame,  
Bring not the things of past,  
But encompass in my aim  
All that future days could ask.

From the conscious touches known  
The worthy I still need,  
But from past I have not grown  
If vision does not lead.

Fleeting moments pass away,  
Your memories linger sweet,  
But to live a yesterday  
Is shackles on my feet.

Things departed from my sphere,  
As I rise to meet dawn,  
Inspire and linger near  
As I strive to carry on.

## SIXTEEN

Silence, break your grewsome spell,  
Shriek, murmur, moan or wail;  
Sinister sounds, suggestions of hell  
Would sweeter be than is your tale.

Oh! could I discern a sound  
In that vast, silent span  
Beyond the sixteen years where I found  
A fairyland at my command.

Mystic dreams of fairy days  
Still float with dolls and toys  
On the vista where encroaching haze  
Shuts out the world of future joys.

Or is sorrow written there?  
Oh, silence and suspense!  
Is the shadowed future dark and bare,  
Or filled with labor's recompense?

Silence, speak! at last a sound,  
The whispered voice of time  
In this doubtful, restless soul has found  
An answer to this life of mine.

Each day answers for its own.  
'Tis well,—those dreams of mine,  
Like a magic span, today were thrown  
Between my sweet sixteen and time.

## DIVINE MEDITATION

A single ray—  
From light of day—  
Divided seven times—  
Will transfuse—  
To many hues—  
As they unite—  
Divide—  
To scatter on the countryside—  
Each its personal touch bestows—  
Color to the fields—  
The green of leaf—  
The lilies white—  
The red of rose—  
Or congregate upon the pansies' bloom—  
Until autumn's breath with age confuse—  
And winter—  
Drab with its sinister suggestions of night—  
Snuffs out the light—

Think you they are gone?—  
Pluck from yonder tree its dearest bough—  
Agitate its hushed repose—  
Oppose its form—  
Twist it on the stone—  
It smokes—  
A spark appears—  
Ah! it bursts out into flame—

There is the light that died—  
On autumn's countryside—  
The touch of time and active force did not destroy—  
But willed them to an aim.

## SECULAR MEDITATION

Catch from yonder breath of air—  
A particle—  
Magnify—  
And find—  
A planet of our kind—  
Of living things—  
That make a cycle of consciousness—  
Complete in purpose, love and hope—  
Before it registers on your mind—  
Now magnify again—  
A universe has grown—  
Of planets, satellites and suns—  
As complete in miniature—  
As is your own—  
Or look into the evening sky—  
Extend your vision there—  
The stars that you behold—  
Are floating specks—  
(Like the particle magnified)—  
To greater beings—  
That move across a span of luminaries—  
To them—  
As sands upon the shore of sea—  
And we to them—  
Are as your particle to us—  
Nor stop your vision even there—  
Mysteries confront their searching mind—  
Else they question not—

In fear it be divine—  
Extend your vision where you will—  
And find—  
Your universe is but a particle—  
Compared to space and time.

TO MOTHER'S ANNIVERSARY

Today is yours—  
    —our treat.  
Time scores—  
    —still it's sweet  
Just to know—  
    —in smile and tear  
That time may go—  
    —but you are here.  
A sentiment—  
    —still it's true  
We are happiest—  
    —that you are you.

Mother, dear—  
    —we can not say  
What we feel—  
    —about today.  
We try so hard—  
    —but, oh heck!  
Our very best—  
    —is just a speck

Upon the sea—  
    —of flowing pride  
That you are still—  
    —at our side.

We count the candles—

—and we know

We are nearer—

—as we grow.

We seek expression—

—year by year

But can not improve—

—“Mother dear.”



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